



Final Report of the Joint Study Committee on Teacher Training and Certification

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INTRODUCTION

House Resolution 1103 created the Joint Study Committee on Teacher Training and Certification (Committee) in order to study the teacher education programs that are offered in the public and private universities and colleges in Georgia. With Georgia having over 100,000 teachers that are the cornerstone of the state's public education system, it is critical that teachers are appropriately educated and prepared to serve in classrooms across the state. The General Assembly recognized that it is beneficial to assess Georgia's teacher training programs, certification process, and requirements, and their impact on the students of Georgia.

Representative Brooks Coleman, Chairman of the House Education Committee and Senator Dan Weber, Chairman of the Senate Education Committee served as the Committee's Co-chairmen. Other members of the Committee were: Senator Seth Harp; Senator Don Balfour; Senator Ed Harbison; Representative Bill Hembree; Representative Amy Carter; Representative Howard Maxwell; Mr. Will Stoll; Ms. Cynthia Kuhlman; Dr. Elaine Connell; Ms. Emily Jennette; Dr. Penny Elkins; Ms. Kathy Cox, Superintendent of the Georgia Department of Education; Mr. Errol B. Davis, Chancellor of the Board of Regents; and Mr. Kelly Henson of the Professional Standards Commission.

The Committee held public hearings on four dates: August 27, 2008 at the Coverdell Legislative Office Building; on October 16, 2008 at the Coverdell Legislative Office Building; on November 19th, 2008 at Georgia State University in the College of Education; and on December 19, 2008 at the State Capitol. During these hearings, the Committee heard testimony from the following individuals: Dr. Charles Knapp, Former President of the University of Georgia; Mr. Kelly Henson, Executive Secretary of the Professional Standards Commission; Mr. Errol B. Davis, Chancellor of the Georgia Board of Regents; Dr. Penny Elkins, Department Chair of Educational Leadership at Mercer University, Ms. Kathy Cox, Superintendent of the Georgia Department of Education; Ms. Lyn Stanfield, Apple, Inc.; Ms. Joy Hawkins, Teacher Retention Project with Policy Recommendations, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Stuart Bennett, Executive Director of the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders; Ms. Deb Page, Executive Director of the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement; Mr. Bill Kirkland, Program Manager of Troops for Teachers; Mr. Kwame Griffith, Executive Director of Teach for America; Ms. Margaret Ciccarelli, Staff Attorney for the Professional Association of Georgia Educators; Mr. David Saba, President of the American Board for Certification and Teacher Excellence; and Dr. Lynne Weisenbach, Vice Chancellor for P-16 Initiatives for the Georgia Board of Regents. The testimony from the above mentioned individuals, coupled with research and investigations by committee members, led to the formulation of twelve recommendations to address areas of need in teacher training, recruitment, certification and retention.

In the subsequent pages, each recommendation is presented using the following format:

- statement of the problem;
- committee recommendation;
- implementation requirements;
- funding requirements; and
- timeline.

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COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Differentiated Pay for Math and Science Teachers and Elementary Endorsements

Statement of the Issue or Problem

Today, in Georgia, we have a critical shortage of qualified math and science teachers. Because of the insufficient production of math and science teachers, expanded high school graduation curriculum requirements, and student enrollment growth, this shortage will dramatically worsen unless aggressive and immediate action is taken.

In order for Georgia students to graduate from high school fully prepared to enter college or other post-secondary training, they must receive a strong background in science and math that begins at the elementary level. Many elementary teachers have a much stronger background in reading and language arts than in math and science. Enhanced training in math and science is needed by many elementary teachers.

Committee Recommendation

The Study Committee recommends legislation that would enact and fund the Alliance Math and Science Task Force proposals for differentiated pay for math and science teachers and stipends for elementary teachers who complete an endorsement in math and/or science.

How Will the Recommendation Be Implemented?

Legislation is required for the implementation of this recommendation. Upon the request of co-chairs Senator Weber and Representative Coleman, selected committee members will work with legislators and legislative counsel to draft legislation.

Is Funding Required?

The differentiated pay recommendation will cost approximately \$9.6 million annually. The elementary endorsement will cost approximately \$350,000 with the cost increasing as more elementary teachers acquire the endorsements. The total amount of \$9.9 million represents less than one fourth of a one percent teacher pay raise.

Timeline

Legislation will be proposed to the General Assembly in the 2009 legislative session but funding will not be provided until the 2010-2011 budget year.

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2. University/School System Partnerships

Statement of the Issue or Problem

Partnerships between colleges/universities and school systems have proven to be an effective way to recruit and train teachers and support local school initiatives to improve academic achievement. Although the committee has learned of several innovative partnerships, many more need to be established.

Committee Recommendation

The Study Committee recommends that partnerships between colleges/universities (both public and private) and school systems continue to be developed and implemented. Examples of such partnerships include, but are not limited to, Coweta County Schools and the University of West Georgia, Brenau University and Gainesville City Schools, and Georgia Southern University and Screven County Schools. The Study Committee also recommends that the Professional Standards Commission (PSC) provide the needed flexibility to promote these partnerships and that colleges and universities value the work of professors in these partnerships relative to tenure decisions and in other important ways.

How Will the Recommendation Be Implemented?

The Study Committee recommends that a resolution be passed urging the Department of Education (DOE), PSC, public and private colleges/universities and local school systems to work together to promote partnerships. Upon the request of co-chairs Senator Weber and Representative Coleman, selected committee members will work with legislators and legislative counsel to assist in drafting the resolution.

Is Funding Required?

No funding is required.

Timeline

The urging resolution will be proposed to the General Assembly in the 2009 legislative session.

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3. Five-Year Vesting

Statement of the Issue or Problem

The Teacher Retirement System of Georgia (TRS) has a ten-year vesting period. Many states in close proximity to Georgia have established a five-year retirement vesting period. These states use this shorter vesting period as a recruitment tool to attract Georgia educators, including, in particular, individuals who choose teaching as a second career.

Committee Recommendation

The Study Committee recommends legislation that would change the vesting period for TRS in Georgia from ten (10) years to five (5) years.

How Will the Recommendation Be Implemented?

Co-chair Representative Coleman will initiate legislation to change the vesting period.

Is Funding Required?

The cost is to be determined by TRS.

Timeline

The legislation will be proposed in the 2009 legislative session. Retirement bills require a two-year legislative process.

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4. Professional Development for Principals

Statement of the Issue or Problem

Other than the classroom teacher, no one has a greater impact on student achievement than the principal. Studies have consistently shown that high performing principals are the driving force behind attracting and retaining quality teachers for a school and creating a culture of learning and respect in the school environment. High performing principals create good working conditions for teachers and work well with parents and all community members to create support for the school and its students. In short, excellent schools have high performing principals, and schools in need of improvement do not have high performing principals. There are few, if any, exceptions to this “rule.” All principals need the skills and knowledge to optimally impact teacher performance and student learning.

Committee Recommendation

The Study Committee recommends that a design team be appointed to develop a program to enhance the knowledge, skills and performance of principals. The design team should emphasize skills most related to teacher retention, including the concept of distributed leadership. The study committee shall also examine ways to support principals at the school house level so that number of hours dedicated to administrative tasks is reduced, thereby allowing the principals to spend more time on instruction and teacher development. Also, the Study Committee supports the work of the Board of Regents (BOR)/University System of Georgia (USG) colleges and universities, private colleges and universities, school systems and the PSC in implementing the new Leadership Preparation Rule.

How Will the Recommendation Be Implemented?

A mandatory joint resolution is proposed to create the design team. Upon the request of co-chairs Weber and Coleman, selected members of the Study Committee will work with legislators and legislative counsel to assist in developing the joint resolution. If required, legislation based on the work of the design team will be proposed in the 2010 legislative session.

Is Funding Required?

Funding will be required. The amount of funding requested will be determined by the design team.

Timeline

The mandatory joint resolution to create the design team will be proposed to the General Assembly in the 2009 legislative session. The design team will finish and submit its work to co-chairs Weber and Coleman no later than July 30, 2009.

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5. Expansion of Teach For America

Statement of the Issue or Problem

Teach for America moves high performing graduates from prestigious colleges and universities into teaching. Teach for America has a limited presence in Georgia, and there is a desire to expand the Teach for America program in the state.

Committee Recommendation

The Study Committee recommends that a dialogue be initiated with appropriate officials with Teach for America to discuss the expansion of this program in Georgia. The Study Committee further recommends that data on Teach for America teachers be collected regarding teacher quality, teacher retention and student achievement to measure the program's effectiveness.

How Will the Recommendation Be Implemented?

The PSC will assume responsibility for this recommendation and will move forward immediately to contact officials with Teach for America about an expansion of their program. The PSC will also request data on Teach for America teacher retention, teacher quality and student achievement.

Is Funding Required?

No funding is required.

Timeline

The PSC will initiate contact with Teach for America immediately. A report will be submitted to co-chairs Senator Weber and Representative Coleman on the program's expansion by August 2010.

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6. College/University Production of Teachers

Statement of the Issue or Problem

Our state faces significant teacher shortages, particularly in high-need fields such as math, science and special education. Our state also has a nine percent rate of teacher attrition each year, which adds to the shortage. Increased teacher production from our state's private and USG institutions must constitute a major part of the solution. Also, retention rates of teachers prepared by Georgia's public and private institutions are higher than those prepared by out-of-state providers.

Committee Recommendation

The Study Committee fully supports the USG's commitment to meet 80 percent of the state's need for teachers within the next 12 years ("20,000 x 2020" initiative), a significant increase from the current level of 30 percent. The Study Committee supports adding teacher preparation programs at additional institutions, enhancing the teacher preparation process, meeting needs through a targeted regional approach, and implementing innovative initiatives such as the collaborative effort between five USG institutions, the USG and PSC to have on-line, STEM focused Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) programs operational in January, 2009. The Study Committee recommends that private institutions, which currently produce approximately 20 percent of the state's need for teachers, give strong consideration to increasing the number of teacher preparation programs, especially in math, the sciences, and special education. The committee also requests that BOR/USG colleges and universities address concerns about five-year teacher preparation programs in light of current teacher shortages and USG's goal of enhancing the teacher preparation process.

How Will the Recommendation Be Implemented?

The Study Committee recommends that a resolution be passed urging the BOR/USG institutions and private colleges and universities to aggressively meet the goals set forth in this recommendation. Upon the request of co-chairs Senator Weber and Representative Coleman, selected members of the Study Committee will work with legislators and legislative counsel to assist in drafting this resolution.

Is Funding Required?

No funding is required at this time; however, there will be additional resources needed for full implementation of 20,000 x 2020 and to support public and private college initiatives.

Timeline

The urging resolution is to be proposed to the General Assembly in the 2009 legislative session.

Anticipated schedule of BOR and private college action:

By April, 2009:

- Development of regional plans
- BOR and private institutions receive plans and set specific targets
- Implement MAT/STEM on-line

By November, 2009:

- Full regional implementation

By September, 2009:

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- Analysis of data
- Revise plans based on analysis of data

Ongoing:

- Collaboration between USG/private institutions and the PSC regarding rules and regulations

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7. Alternative Routes to Certification

Statement of the Issue or Problem

By 2012, 28,749 new teachers each year will be needed to meet growth and replacement demands. Traditional educator preparation programs cannot meet this need alone. Alternative routes to certification can help provide a large and excellent pool of teacher candidates, such as career switchers, college graduates who did not complete a traditional teacher preparation program, and international teachers. Frequently, these candidates encounter barriers to entering the profession. These barriers include the amount of time, money and coursework necessary to complete a preparation program, as well as certification rules that limit international teachers' access to classrooms in Georgia.

Committee Recommendations

The Study Committee supports the development of more efficient alternative routes to certification. The Study Committee recommends that the PSC have a new and more streamlined route developed and approved by April 2009. Furthermore, the Study Committee supports the Adjunct Teacher Proposal made by the Alliance Math and Science Task Force and recommends that the necessary rules be developed and approved by the PSC no later than April 2009. Lastly, the Study Committee supports more flexible certification rules to give international teachers greater access to Georgia classrooms, and recommends that the PSC adopt appropriate rules no later than March 30, 2009.

How Will the Recommendation Be Implemented?

The following rules will be presented to the PSC in March 2009, with adoption anticipated by April 30, 2009:

- to develop an additional alternative route to certification that will be less burdensome and time-consuming to the candidate;
- to create the Adjunct Teacher program; and,
- to give, working collaboratively with the DOE, greater flexibility in the recruitment of international teachers.

Is Funding Required?

No funding will be required.

Timeline

This recommendation will be fully implemented by April 30, 2009.

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8. Georgia Virtual School

Statement of the Issue or Problem

The Georgia Virtual School program expands educational opportunities available to students and has the potential to help solve teacher shortages in critical-need subject areas and in schools and systems that are hard-to-staff. The number of seats in the Georgia Virtual School program is currently capped, limiting its utilization. This school year, all slots were filled by September 1, 2008.

Committee Recommendations

The Study Committee requests that Superintendent Cox work with the Governor's Office and the Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) regarding redirected or increased funding for the Georgia Virtual School. The Georgia Virtual School program should give top priority to hard-to-staff/high-need schools and to critical-need subject areas.

How Will the Recommendation Be Implemented?

The DOE will propose legislative changes concerning expansion. The DOE will work with the PSC on the creation of a Virtual Education Endorsement for teachers.

Is Funding Required?

Funding will be determined based on the work of the DOE with OPB.

Timeline

Legislation will be proposed to the General Assembly in the 2009 legislative session. Criteria for the endorsement will be established by June 2009.

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9. Merit Pay/Payment for “Unused” Leadership Degrees

Statement of the Issue or Problem

For decades, Georgia, like most other states, has followed a lockstep, single salary schedule for K-12 teachers, basing compensation on years of experience and highest degree earned with no real regard for performance. Times have changed. In an age of increasing accountability and expectations, the single salary schedule for teachers has become largely ineffective and outdated. Teachers who perform poorly are compensated at the same rate as highly effective teachers.

Additionally, with increasing frequency over the past decade, teachers have earned salary increases by obtaining an advanced degree in leadership. A new career path for teachers is needed to encourage and reward teacher leadership and to provide teachers a financial and professional option that will positively impact teacher performance and student achievement.

Committee Recommendation

The Study Committee recommends that the DOE, PSC, Office of Student Achievement (OSA), public and private colleges/universities, selected teachers and other public and private sector personnel develop a proposal for a merit/performance pay model. The proposal should include multiple criteria, including academic achievement based on a growth model assessment. The proposal should also include a teacher career path that rewards teacher leadership.

The Study Committee recommends that legislation be considered that would change current rules and procedures relative to paying educators for “unused” leadership degrees. Should such legislation be initiated, the Study Committee recommends that it not be retroactive for either current educators or educators who complete an approved educational leadership program of study by August 1, 2010.

How Will the Recommendation Be Implemented?

A mandatory joint resolution is proposed to create the task force that will develop the proposal for a merit/performance pay model and recommend legislation regarding “unused” leadership degrees. Upon the request of co-chairs Senator Weber and Representative Coleman, selected members of the Study Committee will work with legislators and legislative counsel to assist in developing the joint resolution.

Is Funding Required?

No appropriation is needed in the 2009 session. Funding will be required in either the 2010 or 2011 session. The amount of required funding will be subject to specifics in the proposal.

Timeline

The mandatory joint resolution to create the task force will be proposed in the 2009 legislative session. Legislation regarding merit pay and “unused” leadership degrees will be developed for the General Assembly to consider in the 2010 session. Implementation is tentatively scheduled for the 2011-2012 school year.

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10. Service Cancelable Loans

Statement of the Issue or Problem

Approximately 25 percent of all newly employed teachers in Georgia enter the profession through alternative routes. Additional alternative routes to teacher certification are being developed to give greater access to the profession to career switchers and college graduates who have not completed a traditional teacher preparation program. While service cancelable loans are available for many prospective educators, Georgia Code does not currently allow teacher candidates in alternative routes access to service cancelable loans.

Committee Recommendation

The Study Committee recommends that funding currently utilized for service cancelable loans (HOPE and/or Promise Scholarships) also be made available to teacher candidates prepared through alternative routes including, but not limited to, Georgia TAPP, MAT programs and the One-Year Supervised Practicum. It should be noted that current funding levels for these loan programs are insufficient, so this change could impact the availability of these loans for currently-eligible candidates.

How Will the Recommendation Be Implemented?

Legislation is required to make service cancelable loans available to teacher candidates in alternative preparation programs. Upon the request of co-chairs Senator Weber and Representative Coleman, selected Study Committee members will work with legislators and legislative counsel to assist in drafting the legislation.

Is Funding Required?

No additional funding is required. As the need for service cancelable loans increases, the funding level of service cancelable loans should be revisited.

Timeline

Legislation will be proposed to the General Assembly in the 2009 legislative session.

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11. Teacher Working Conditions

Statement of the Issue or Problem

A tremendous amount of data have been collected on teacher working conditions. However, these data have not been shared on any large scale basis with individuals such as principals and superintendents who can use the data to improve teacher working conditions.

Committee Recommendations

The Study Committee recommends that a review of existing data on teacher working conditions be completed and that all superintendents and principals be fully informed of the findings.

How Will the Recommendation Be Implemented?

Superintendent Cox and the DOE will assume responsibility for implementing this recommendation.

Is Funding Required?

No funding is required.

Timeline

Superintendent Cox will begin implementation at the spring Bootstrap conference of the Georgia School Superintendents Association.

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12. New Teacher Induction/Support

Statement of the Issue or Problem

In order to reduce Georgia's teacher attrition rate and to enhance the effectiveness of teachers new to the profession, a support (induction) program for new educators is needed. Beginning special education teachers face the additional challenges of entering a very litigious field with complex federal guidelines, and of meeting the diverse special needs of their students. These issues, along with all the other issues common to beginning teachers, can impact both the effectiveness and retention of beginning special education teachers.

Committee Recommendations

The Study Committee finds great value in new teacher induction programs and other efforts to support new teachers such as mentoring and coaching. The Study Committee recommends that all school systems, working collaboratively with colleges and universities, the DOE and teacher and other professional organizations, have in place an effective support system for new teachers. The Study Committee recommends that special education be the initial focus of this effort with a plan to expand the state program to include all beginning teachers.

How Will the Recommendation Be Implemented?

Superintendent Cox and the DOE will take responsibility for implementing this recommendation.

Is Funding Required?

At this time, no new funds are required. Existing funds will be used to seed the initial focus on induction for beginning special education teachers.

Timeline

Superintendent Cox will present a plan for an initial induction program for beginning special education teachers by June 2009.

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CONCLUSION:

Through a focus on pre-service preparation, in-service development and support, and compensation, benefits and working conditions, the recommendations of the Joint Study Committee on Teacher Training and Certification address teacher shortages, enhanced teacher quality, and retention of educators. The implementation of the Study Committee's recommendations will make a positive impact on education in Georgia.

Most, but not all, recommendations call for legislative action. The table below lists the recommendations indicates if legislative action is proposed, and states beginning timelines.

Summary of Recommended Legislative Action

	Recommendation	Legislative Action	Beginning Timeline
1.	Differentiated pay for math and science teachers and elementary endorsements	Bill	2009 session
2.	University/school system partnerships	Resolution	2009 session
3.	Five-year vesting	Bill	2009-2010 session
4.	Professional development for principals	Resolution to create design team	2009 session
5.	Expansion of Teach for America	N/A	Immediate
6.	College/university production of teachers	Resolution	2009 session
7.	Alternative routes to certification	N/A	April 2009
8.	Georgia Virtual School	Bill	2009 session
9.	Merit pay/payment for "unused" leadership degrees	Resolution to create task force	2009 session
10.	Service cancelable loans	Bill	2009 session
11.	Teacher working conditions	N/A	Immediate
12.	New teacher induction/support	Not initially	June 2009

In recognition of the importance of providing a high quality education for all P-12 learners, the Study Committee encourages the adoption of its recommendations aimed at facilitating and enhancing the recruitment, preparation, certification, induction and retention of educators who are fully equipped to meet the needs of Georgia's students.

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RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Perspective/Discussion

The Committee met throughout the summer and fall to discuss the issues facing Georgia today in relation to teacher certification, pay training, and methods to encourage young students to enter the teaching profession. During the first meeting, Dr. Charles Knapp presented information that encouraged swiftly integrating the world-wide labor market at all levels and finding ways to recover money the state is putting into the system. Mr. Kelly Henson focused on Georgia's teacher shortage, and pointed out that the system had an 11.5 percent shortage last year, mainly focused in science and math. With 82 percent of new teachers emerging from public universities, it is critical that new sources of teachers emerge by offering alternative methods of certification, attracting those returning from an absence of teaching and high performers from other states with a more competitive pay scale.

Mr. Henson offered several suggestions for teacher certification and training in Georgia: Build teacher workforce in the 11th and 12th grade by encouraging dual high school and college enrollment, in order to earn an associates degree in high school and a faster bachelors degree in college; expand teachers in Georgia, using an organization such as Teach for America and focus on critical shortage areas; and expand capacity of virtual schools in order to utilize and promote online learning.

The Alliance of Education Agency Heads issued seven task force recommendations to the Committee that focused on attracting new math and science teachers with differentiated pay; increasing the number of elementary teacher math and science endorsements; creating an efficient alternative middle and high school teacher preparation route; creating adjunct faculty certification for high needs subjects, such as science and mathematics; redirecting teacher scholarship loan funds for college students who intend to become math or science teachers; increasing science teacher education programs in our university system; and, improving teacher retention by designing and implementing a new teacher induction program. Appendix A offers a more in-depth look at these recommendations.

The Board of Regents (Board) stressed that teacher education is a top priority and Georgia schools need more teachers that can reach children, noting a 58 percent increase in children in Georgia during the 2002-2008 years. In order to excel in teacher quality, the Board of Regents presented a plan to produce 20,000 teachers by the year 2020. The Board will focus on offering alternative routes to accommodate the changing population of potential teachers, continuing strong collaboration with the Department of Education and the Professional Standards Commission, sustaining and deepening partnerships with schools and districts, and increasing the appropriate use of technology to more quickly prepare teachers while maintaining quality.

Dr. Penny Elkins focused on teacher retention, pointing out that schools were more likely to retain teachers if they were: in a supportive work and university environment; older at the point of entry into the classroom; motivated to enter the teaching profession because of their personal value for education; and improving or giving back to society through educating the youth. Dr. Elkins emphasized that teachers who were certified through alternative routes believed that daily contact with mentors who provide emotional and technical support was an important component to teaching success and continuing in the teaching profession. Also, programs like Mercer University, which provide curriculum development, classroom management, teaching strategies, and mentoring, were critical to teaching success. She also emphasized the growing number of graduate programs at

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private colleges that focused on educational leadership as important in developing successful educational leaders, principals and teachers.

State Superintendent Kathy Cox discussed the improvements in Georgia overall, in Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), with 37 schools removed from the Needs Improvement List and noted Georgia's 74 percent graduation rate was the highest it had ever been. Superintendent Cox presented a proposed plan, CLASS KEYS, which are four keys to quality: school keys, leader keys, class keys, and Georgia Performance Standard keys that have set standards based on elements that have been identified as imperative to ensure school improvement. CLASS KEYS would become a new statewide instrument to evaluate teachers, and when fully implemented will replace the current Georgia Teacher Evaluation program. Appendix B offers an in-depth look at CLASS KEYS.

Subsequent meetings focused on current issue areas, teacher preparation, leadership development, retention, recruitment and compensation, and private-public partnerships between local systems and universities.

Representative Carter presented comments from teachers statewide who expressed different frustrations that were presented within the teaching profession. Teachers commented that a number of solutions would improve workforce retention and performance. They noted that a low pay scale, large class sizes, lack of available mentoring programs, lack of parental involvement, and increased paperwork as some of their concerns with the teaching profession.

Other concerns were raised by the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce that focused on partnering the business community with the education community, specifically with recruitment and retention. The state needs approximately 15,000 new teachers a year, and currently only produces 5,000 teachers. The Chamber recommended using measurements with clear data in order to locate where the best return will be achieved from the taxpayers and various partners' investments.

Developing a network of leadership training and certificates of leadership would increase teacher preparation and mentoring opportunities. Mr. Stuart Bennett discussed the importance of effective leadership which is an important quality of high-performing quality schools. Opportunities through affiliates to provide a leadership network in order to increase access to high quality offerings needs to be developed. These coaching and leadership programs for new principals and leaders would assist in helping the teaching and education profession grow.

Discussion among committee members and testimony focused on teacher retention, teacher recruitment, teacher compensation, and equitable distribution of educators throughout the state. There is a concern over the length of time it is taking students in education programs in our university system to complete program requirements.

Partnering stakeholders with education programs would prepare students for teaching, while providing interaction with K-12 students and would assist in a faster completion of the university student's degree. One example of this is the partnering of Coweta County Schools, through the Teacher Induction Program with the University of West Georgia.

Creating a model similar to the Coweta County program and building similar partnerships across the state would encourage teacher recruitment and retention. A mechanism should be established that

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collects and analyzes data, in order to track the success of the program. The Office of Student Achievement could be the clearinghouse of information in the initial models. Also, multiple criteria with a growth model that includes a teachers' education level and the impact of the educator on students over time should differentiate merit and performance pay for the various roles, challenges and responsibilities educators face.

Other recommendations included focusing on areas that struggled to attract new teachers. Also, utilizing adjunct professors/instructors from local higher education institutions, by employing them in the K-12 classroom setting would increase performance and retention. Creating a more streamlined process with alternative routes for education certification for professionals who aspire to begin a second career in the education field would increase teacher retention and training through this certification process. Utilizing technology with dual certification tracks and professional development through online courses is also encouraged and recommended.

Creating private and public partnerships began out of mutual needs of the colleges and the local school systems within their regions. For example, Mercer University has partnered with lab schools, which allow education students to gain real-life experience by utilizing the local classroom and allows the local system to possibly gain new teachers from the university when they graduate. This helps to raise the level of professionalism with teachers and encourages teacher retention. Professional development, once these students enter the classroom full time, is a crucial step in retaining teachers in Georgia.

The Georgia Virtual School discussion was started by the Department of Education. The Virtual School is accredited and operates in partnership with Georgia parents and schools. It also partners with Universities for joint enrollment. The program has a full high school curriculum with Advanced Placement. The classes are taught by highly qualified teachers and are more efficient for students who desire to graduate high school with dual track seals. The Committee discussed ways to utilize the virtual school in order to offer additional courses to encourage dual enrollment.

Dr. Mark Wilson, principal of Morgan County High School, and the National High School Principals Association principal of the year, discussed leadership qualities amongst high school principals and stressed the value of an effective principal as a leader. Dr. Wilson stressed that principals need to empower teachers to act in order to manage a successful institution. The five keys to success, according to Dr. Wilson, are engagement with teachers, expectations of leadership and teachers, encouragement of institution staff, collaboration in education, and teacher empowerment. First year principals should have mentors to assist them in making decisions and provide expertise in developing an effective leader. Lastly, it was stressed in order to keep teachers in the classroom and not fast-tracking to a leadership role, the salary of teachers needs to be increased.

Committee Report prepared by: Mr. James Touchton, Senate Research Office and Ms. Jennifer Blackerby, House Committee Services